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UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS: REPORT FOR 1994-1995 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET FOR 1996

PART I. AFRICA

Section 17 - Sierra Leone

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

GE.95-02295

I.17 SIERRA LEONE

1. Beneficiary population

1. At 31 December 1994, Sierra Leone hosted a refugee population of 15,874, comprising 15,861 Liberians, mostly Krahns, and 13 others of various nationalities. UNHCR assisted 5,961 Liberians at the Waterloo Refugee Camp; the remainder, being of urban background, lived in Freetown and other urban centres. By the end of June 1995, some 2,300 Liberian refugees had been assisted by UNHCR to return home. As the conflict in Sierra Leone intensified, the civil war came very close to the Waterloo camp in April 1995, and refugees abandoned the camp. At end-May, only 4,585 persons eligible for UNHCR assistance were left in the country. Some 2,000 of them were accommodated at the temporary site at Jui while the rest were living with friends in Freetown; all continue to receive assistance. More than 75 per cent of the refugee population are women, and children under 18 years old.

2. Developments in 1994 and 1995

2. The general insecurity and political instability in Sierra Leone during this period resulted in more internal displacement and the flight of almost 50,000 persons to neighbouring Guinea. The growing insecurity increasingly motivated Liberian refugees to seek repatriation assistance from UNHCR, and it can be expected that more will request this type of assistance during the rest of 1995. Allocations were made available from the General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation in 1994 and 1995 to cover the costs.

3. A temporary new site was made available by the Government of Sierra Leone to accommodate the refugees from Waterloo camp who could not make alternative arrangements on their own. It became necessary to revise the existing care and maintenance budget to absorb the costs for the rehabilitation of the site and of available infrastructure. WFP agreed to provide emergency rations. Given the overriding priorities, activities in the sectors of education, skills-training, income-generation and crop-production have temporarily been suspended.

4. The Sierra Leonean Red Cross Society (SLRCS) reported 50,000 returnees during 1994, a figure which could not be substantiated since the security situation made the returnee area inaccessible. As most returnees live in the camps for internally displaced persons, UNHCR offers basic across-the-board assistance in the form of domestic items, shelter materials and other non-food items. UNHCR also complements the efforts of other agencies in the sectors of water, health, and sanitation.

3. 1996 country programmes

(a) Objectives

5. It seems unlikely that there will be a return to peace and security in the near future. Nonetheless, the Government of Sierra Leone continues its efforts towards ensuring the security of refugees, and UNHCR will continue to provide assistance under a care and maintenance programme during 1996.

6. As in previous years, UNHCR will facilitate voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees. While the political situation in Liberia remains volatile, the security condition in Sierra Leone will determine the magnitude of repatriation of Liberian refugees in 1996. The United States resettlement programme for Liberian refugees has been curtailed as all the eligible cases were already accepted in the course of 1994. The current political and security situation in Sierra Leone does not augur well for local settlement.

(b) Proposed budgets for 1996

7. An increasing number of Liberian refugees who were not assisted previously are requesting UNHCR assistance because they have been displaced by the war. The budgetary provision under care and maintenance will, however, remain at the current level, since the addition of new beneficiaries consisting of deserving cases in need of assistance will be offset by savings due to the voluntary repatriation of some refugees. UNHCR will work with the Government to identify a more permanent site to accommodate the refugees currently in Jui. If the security situation improves, the Waterloo Camp could be utilized again as a more practical and less costly option than setting up a completely new camp. Suspended activities such as primary education, skills-training, income-generation and crop-production could then resume.

8. If voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees is possible, an allocation will be requested from the General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation. Developments in the peace process in Liberia and in the negotiations for the resolution of the conflict in Sierra Leone, as well as the security situation in both Liberia and Sierra Leone, will determine the pace of repatriation from Sierra Leone.

(c) Implementing partners

9. Christian Assistance to Underdeveloped Societies Everywhere (CAUSE)-Canada is UNHCR's implementing partner under the care and maintenance programme. The Christian Council of Sierra Leone (CCSL) which was an implementing partner in 1994, continues to implement the secondary education assistance in 1995. The Government of Sierra Leone, through the National Rehabilitation Committee (NARECOM) continues to coordinate all relief activities. UNHCR funds for assistance to returnees and internally displaced persons are administered by SLRCS and Catholic Relief Services (CRS).

(d) Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs

10. Variations due to changes in budget parameters are not discussed in the subsequent analysis (Overview of UNHCR Activities, Part I (A/AC.96/845) refers).

(i) **1994 expenditure (all sources of funds)**

11. The 1994 expenditure was at the level foreseen in the revised budget. Unforeseen costs for security measures, such as telecommunications equipment and physical security arrangements to the office premises and the hiring of security guards, were offset by lower expenditure for travel.

(ii) **Revised 1995 requirements (all sources of funds)**

12. The revised 1995 requirements are higher than the initial estimates mainly due to deteriorating security. Provision has been made for the continuous hiring of security personnel at the office and at staff members' private homes. Families of staff members were evacuated, in February 1995, to minimize safety risks, and only essential staff remain in Sierra Leone.

(iii) **Initial 1996 requirements (all sources of funds)**

13. The 1996 requirements remain somewhat similar to the ones in 1995. It is foreseen to maintain the provisions for safety measures for the office and for staff members. However, the amount for the purchase of non-expendable property has been reduced due to purchases already made in 1995.

UNHCR EXPENDITURE IN SIERRA LEONE

(in thousands of United States dollars)

1994	1995		1996	
AMOUNT OBLIGATED	ALLOCATION APPROVED BY 1994 EXCOM	PROPOSED REVISED ALLOCATION	SOURCE OF FUNDS AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	PROPOSED ALLOCATION/ PROJECTION
GENERAL PROGRAMMES (1)				
378.3	279.3	359.6	CARE AND MAINTENANCE	331.5
563.4 a/	–	181.0 c/	VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION	–
1.5 b/	–	–	RESETTLEMENT	–
471.1	538.9	582.5	PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Overview Tables (Part II)	567.3
1,414.3	818.2	1,123.1	SUB-TOTAL OPERATIONS	898.8
34.4	12.9	59.5	ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Overview Tables (Part II)	49.5
1,448.7	831.1	1,182.6	TOTAL (1)	948.3
SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (2)				
36.3	76.0	–	EDUCATION ACCOUNT	–
179.7	–	–	OTHER TRUST FUNDS Various Assistance	–
216.0	76.0		TOTAL (2)	
1,664.7	907.1	1,182.6	GRAND TOTAL (1+2)	948.3

a/ of which US$ 302.591 incurred against the General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation
b/ obligation incurred against Other Programmes
c/ allocated from the General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation